

Occurrence of the Fairy Martin in the Perth District.—Until recently the Fairy Martin (*Petrochelidon ariel*) was suspected to be only a sporadic visitor to the Perth area, the sole recorded nesting site being a pottery works at Belmont in October 1937. The species nests regularly at Gingin and there is evidence that it penetrates further south along the west coastal plain corridor. Colonies have been found at Belmont, 1937 and Benger (near Harvey) 1961, and the southern corridor has also been used because Jackson recorded it at the mouth of the Frankland River in 1912 (Serventy and Whittell, *Birds of Western Australia*, 1962).

On September 20, 1964, some boys informed me of the existence of bottle-shaped, mud nests at a disused clay pit on the property of L. Whiteman, Middle Swan. The site was investigated and five nests were under construction in a rounded hollow in the cliff-face about eight feet above water level. Four nests were fully lined by October 16, and two contained eggs as shown by the parent birds flying out when approached. A day later my attention was drawn to another small excavation about 50 yards north of the colony, where a cluster of four completed nests was found.

In the main colony, six nests were completed by November 7. One was empty, two contained eggs and the others had chicks in the newly-hatched, half-fledged, and fully-fledged stages. Further investigation brought to light another two half-built nests well away from the other colonies. More mud was added in due course but both were abandoned. A further visit on November 14 showed the destruction of all six nests in the original colony. The young had flown from two of the nests, dead chicks were contained in another and broken shells could be seen beneath the remaining three.

Knowing that Fairy Martins often nest under bridges and culverts, I searched three likely places on the Great Northern Highway between Midland and Bullsbrook. On this date, September 27, a colony was discovered under a culvert about two miles south of Bullsbrook. Dozens of old structures lined the arch and seven new ones had contained eggs as could be seen by the broken egg shells under the nests concerned. Apparently, the nests had been raided by small boys who often explore such places. Evidence strongly suggests that the colony has been used for many years owing to the abundance of the nests and the fewness of birds that usually inhabit such restricted nesting sites.

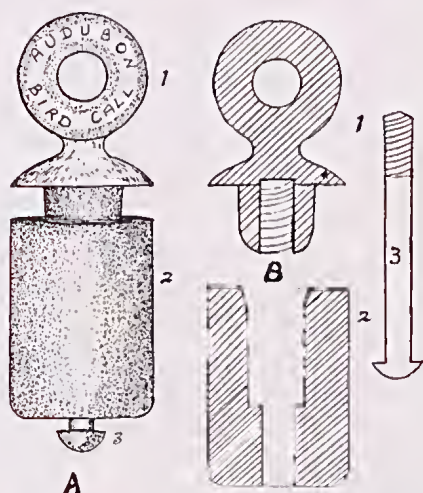
It seems evident that the Fairy Martin is a regular breeding species to suitable areas east of Perth in the Clay Zone. In fact, apart from my findings at Bullsbrook and Middle Swan, Mr. V. Serventy (personal communication) informed me of a discovery he made in 1964 of old nests in similar circumstances to those in the brickworks at Middle Swan at Midvale, some two miles east of Midland. It is not known whether nesting occurred there last season, as Mr. Serventy visited the locality before the breeding season.

As bridges, culverts under roads, clay pits and so on are excellent nesting sites for Fairy Martins, any martins noted in such vicinities should be carefully watched and the locality searched. The nests are

quite distinctive, are easy to find and more nesting colonies would give a clearer picture of this interesting species around Perth.

—Bro. MATTHEW AMEDY, De La Salle College, Midland.

On Calling up Birds.—In July 1962, when Dr. D. L. Serventy returned from America, he very kindly brought me back an Audubon Bird Call. This call was first developed in the U.S.A. in 1952 by Roger Eddy, and with the approval of the National Audubon Society it was trademarked the Audubon bird call. It is now almost a standard piece of equipment with most American bird watchers. The item is made from birchwood with a pewter twisting attachment, when the metal is turned in the wood a squeaking sound is produced; by manipulation the squeaks can be turned into chirps, eaks, or trills the loudness of which can easily be controlled. For anyone interested in observing birds at close quarters one of these gadgets should be part of their equipment.



A., The Audubon Bird Call, x 2. B., the component parts: 1, Metal Twister; 2, Hood, in section; 3, Screw.

The results obtained so far have been good and the following lists record the birds attracted on two particular occasions:—

At Rudgyard, 2 miles east of Denmark on Wilson Inlet, on January 20, 1963, the following birds responded—

Two Spinebills (*Acanthorhynchus superciliosus*), a male and a female. The female in her excitement perched on my shoulder, when she realized her mistake she flew to a branch about two feet away where the male joined her.

Six New Holland Honeyeaters (*Meliornis novae-hollandiae*). These birds were very restless and kept flying onto a branch about five feet from me. They would stay for a few seconds chattering then depart as a group to some scrub about 30 feet away; after a short while the six would then come back to the branch. As long as the call was operating the birds kept coming and going.